

Land Use and the Ashley River District

Evidence of Sprawl: Urban growth in the greater Charleston metropolitan area exceeded population growth by a 6:1 ratio from 1973 to 1994¹.

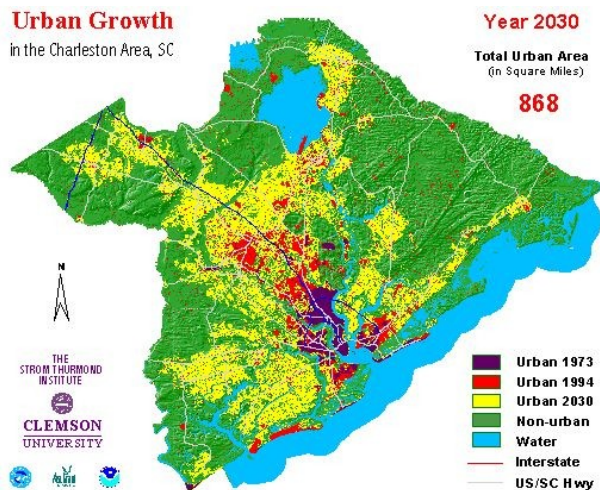
Population Trends: Dorchester County population increased by nearly 200% from 1970 to 1990. Much of the growth occurred near the Ashley River District².

Growth Projections: Urban growth predictions estimate that sprawl will consume 868 square miles of the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) area by 2030³.

Resources at risk:⁴

- 57% Cultural/Historic Sites
- 36% Archeological Sites
- 35% Freshwater Wetlands
- 41% Tidal Creeks

Future Outlook: South Carolina is one of the nation's top retirement areas. New residents continue to be attracted to the many benefits of the Lowcountry. Preservation and conservation of the Ashley Scenic River and Historic District will ensure that this exceptional legacy lives on for all residents.



References: BCD COG, University of SC, SC DNR¹; BCD COG²; Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute³; Presentation given by Jeff Allen, Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute⁴

The Ashley Scenic River Advisory Council is composed of local citizens representing river-bordering landowners, river users, and community groups with interests in the river.

The Legislature designated the Ashley as a State Scenic River in 1998. The Advisory Council was formed in 1999 and the Council completed the Ashley Scenic River Management Plan in 2002.

The Ashley Scenic River Management Plan expresses the Council's goals and recommendations, which are a product of a two-year community input process. The Council has no regulatory authority and their goals are pursued primarily through education and advocacy.

We're on the web!
[http://www.dnr.sc.gov/water/
envaff/river/ashley_scenic.htm](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/water/envaff/river/ashley_scenic.htm)

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ASHLEY SCENIC RIVER & HISTORIC DISTRICT



A piece of history,
culture, and natural
beauty in our backyard



The Ashley Scenic River is steeped in historical culture and archeology. Named after one of the Lords Proprietors granted charter to the Carolina Colony, the Ashley River flows 36 miles from Cypress Swamp to the Charleston Harbor. The area serves as an exceptional tourist attraction, economic asset, and historical, cultural, and natural relic for the Lowcountry. It contains 26 separate sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of the significant historical sites are listed below.

Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site

One of the earliest villages, founded in 1697, prospered as inland trade center for over 100 years.

Drayton Hall—Completed in 1742, this 630-acre historic site and plantation house has survived the Revolutionary and Civil Wars intact.

Magnolia Plantation & Gardens—

Ancestral home and site of the oldest major public garden in America, this three-century old home has been in the same family since 1671.

Middleton Place—This 18th-century plantation houses the country's oldest landscaped gardens and was home to four important generations of Middletons, including a signer of the Declaration of Independence.



Middleton Place on the Ashley River

Threats

Urban encroachment—suburban sprawl in the South Carolina coast is continuing and increasing. Planners and leaders must encourage development in suitable areas to protect the natural resource “golden egg” that brings economic prosperity to this area.

Irresponsible development—changes in impervious surfaces, increased road traffic, and vegetative buffer decreases due to development cause problems such as runoff, erosion, and decreased water quality.

Habitat loss—the greatest threat to most critical species along the coast is habitat loss. The ability to maintain riverine habitat along the Ashley will determine the success of many species.



The Great Blue Heron and American Alligator

Wildlife

There are many critical and endangered species common in the Ashley River region. Typical wildlife includes:

Kingfishers ~ wood ducks ~ red-winged blackbirds ~ ospreys ~ anhingas ~ herons ~ turtles ~ snakes ~ alligators ~ crabs ~ pelicans ~ otters ~ wood storks ~ egrets ~ eagles ~ owls ~

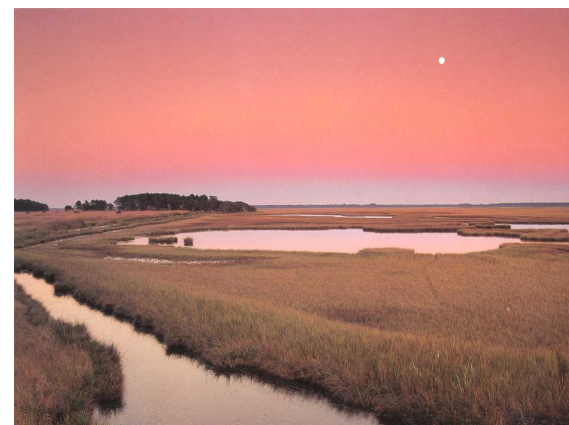
*Not everyone
is lucky
enough to live
upstream
—Mark
Twain*



Hunting and fishing remain common practices on the River

Nature

The Ashley River contains an assemblage of natural resources that provide countless biological, aesthetic, recreational, and cultural benefits to the Lowcountry region. The Scenic River is also a source of community and historical pride and plays a significant role in attracting new residents and economic activity to the area. The Ashley is a tidal river, a dynamic system where saltwater and freshwater ecosystems shift continually. The freshwater zone of the River supports forested wetlands dominated by bald cypress, tupelo, sweet gum, red maple, and willows. The bottomland forest transitions to riparian marshland, dominated by pickerel weed, bull rushes, and cattails. Further downstream, brackish water becomes saline and black needlerush and smooth cordgrass emerge as the Ashley opens up into the Charleston Harbor.



Sunset on the Ashley